Forensic Technology
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These graphics show the elements that should be considered and reported with suspected substance related, drowning, falls, firearms, and SUID cases.

Frequently Used Data Elements Collection Systems and Primary Documentation

This measles chart is intended to provide a graphical representation of government systems that collect similar death investigation data elements. The X axis represents five mortality collection systems, and the Y axis represents the frequently used data elements put together by the MDI-Data-WG. Layered on top of this information are sections of color that correspond to the primary documentation in the upper left-corner of where that information may typically come from (i.e., primary documentation source).

Primary Documentation

- ● Decedent
- ● Scene(s)
- ● Witness Reports
- ● Documentation/Records
- ● Output of the MEC Investigation
- ✴ For a delayed death, this information may only be available via Documentation/Records.

Medicolegal Death Investigations:
Case-Specific Data Elements Captured in Federal Mortality Data Systems

Medicolegal Death Investigation Core Data Elements	US Standard Death Certificate	National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)	State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)	National Fatality Review-Case Reporting System (NFR-CRS)	National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs - Unidentified and Unclaimed)	National Forensic Laboratory Information System Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices (NFLIS-MEC)
Demographic						
Name	●	●	●	●	●	
Age	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age Unit	●	●	●	●	●	●
Date of Birth	●	●			●	
Gender			●	●	●	●
Sex	●	●	●	●	●	
Race	●	●	●	●	●	
Ethnicity	●	●	●	●	●	
Social Security Number	●	●				
Marital Status	●	●	●			
Next of Kin	●			●	●	
Occupation	●	●	●		●	
Putative Name					●	
Location						
Name and address where found dead, unconscious, or in distress		●✴	●✴		●✴	
Type of place where injury occurred	●✴	●✴	●✴	●✴	●✴	
Certified street address of injury	●✴	●✴	●✴		●✴	●✴
Decedent's residence – details	●	●	●	●	●	
Type of Residence		●	●	●	●	
Scene investigation address		●			●	
Decedent's address	●	●		●	●	
Categorization of place of death	●✴	●✴	●✴	●✴	●✴	
Name of place where death was pronounced	●	●	●		●	●
Address of place where death was pronounced	●	●	●		●	●
Type of place where death was pronounced	●✴	●✴			●✴	
Place last known alive				●✴	●✴	
Name of hospital where decedent was first taken		●✴			●✴	

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Circumstances						
Cause-specific information		✷	✷	✷	✷	
Safety issues		✷	✷	✷	✷	
Social history						
OSHA injury						
Who last knew decedent to be alive		✷			✷	
Number of other persons known to be dead from same incident						
Who found the decedent		✷			✷	
Deaths associated with legal intervention		✷	✷			
Informants/witnesses		✷	✷	✷		
Events leading to death occurred while decedent was working		✷		✷		
How decedent was last known to be alive			✷	✷	✷	
Potential referrals						
Drugs found at scene		✷	✷	✷	✷	
Date and Time						
Case reviews						
Date and time death was pronounced						
Qualification of date of death						
Certified date and time of death						
Certified time of injury						
Year by which case is categorized						
Date death reported to MEC						
Date and time found dead		✷	✷	✷	✷	
Dates of all examinations, inspections, and/or case reviews, and by whom		✷		✷		
Date and time of injury/onset of events leading to death		✷		✷	✷	✷
Qualification of injury date		✷				
Date and time last known alive		✷	✷		✷	
Date and time decedent arrived at hospital						

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Narrative						
Narrative description of circumstances	●	●	●	●	●	
Medical History						
Pregnancy history	●	●	●	●	●	
Medical history		●	●	●		
Decedent's physicians or health providers						
Type of agonal treatment or therapy			●			
Recent trauma		●		●	●	
Family medical history		●		●		
Procedures performed		●		●	●	
Prescriptions		●	●	●		
Exam/Autopsy						
Specific autopsy findings – autopsy report		●	●	●	●	
Organ weights						
Ancillary procedures performed				●		
Limited autopsy	●	●	●	●		●
Toxicology						
Toxicology results		●	●	●	●	●
Specific tox tests performed		●		●		
Toxicology samples		●				
Cause & Manner						
Cause of Death (lines 1-4)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Other significant conditions	●	●	●	●		●
Manner of death	●	●	●	●	●	●
Duration of condition of cause of death (lines 1-4)	●	●	●	●		
Certified explanation of how injury occurred	●	●	●	●		

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Case Specific						
Suspected Substance-Related Elements		●✱	●✱	●✱	●✱	
Suspected Drowning-Related Elements		●✱		●✱	●✱	
Suspected Fall-Related Elements		●✱		●✱	●✱	
Suspected Sudden Unexplained Infant Death-Related Elements		●✱		●✱		
Suspected Firearm-Related Elements		●✱		●✱	●✱	

Note: Case-specific data elements captured during an investigation do not stand alone, but rather complement the Medicolegal Death Investigation Frequently Used Data Elements.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2003. "U.S. Standard Certificate of Death." https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/death11-03final-acc.pdf.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. "State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) Coding Manual." National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/media/pdfs/SUDORS_Coding_Manual_0D2A_v6.3.pdf.

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